

CORRESPONDENCE

DECLINING INTEREST IN GEOLOGY

The timely discourse by Dr. B.P. Radhakrishna (Jour. Geol. Soc. India, v.57, 2001, pp.193-196) on declining interest in geology appears to be falling on deaf ears. The geology fraternity in the country appears to be in a state of self-indulgence, treading a monotonous path, and losing many an opportunity to retrieve the lost ground.

As the Chinese saying goes, every disaster offers new opportunities – be it landslides, floods, earthquakes, or riverine pollution. Geologists could play a vital role in mapping disaster-prone areas using a combination of remote sensing techniques, field studies and application of other relevant tools. Every geologist knows that the science of seismology comprises two components, namely, mathematical seismology and sesimotectonics. A glance at the seismic zonation map of India would show how unimaginative is the depiction! The Tethys-Indian plate margin in the Himalayan region is shown both as Zone V and IV. Had the basic principles in geology/tectonics been considered, the whole Himalayan region could have been shown as Zone V only, on account its being in the obduction zone, as part of the Tethys basin. Presence of

known faults/shear zones/grabens has not been apparently considered, since Mahanadi and Godavari grabens and Narmada-Son lineament zones are shown in lower categories of zonation, e.g., the Deccan Trap region has been shown in Zone I. Geologists could play a vital role in attempting the seismic zoning of the country.

To tide over the declining interest in geology, major initiatives have to be taken in seismology and seismotectonics. Geological Survey of India will have to take the lead in coordinating the seismic work now being done by more than 20 agencies in the country. Complacency over “shield” (or Stable Continental Region or SCR) shall spell doom if the notion spreads that “shields” will not have earthquakes over $M=6.5$. Once the profession becomes more sound, job opportunities will increase, and more talented young men and women will come to this field. That will be good for the nation and the discipline of geology.

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BOOK REVIEW

TEXT BOOK OF COAL (Indian context) by D. Chandra, R.M. Singh and M.P. Singh,
Tara Book Agency, Kamachha, Varanasi - 221 010; 2000, 402p. Price Rs.400/-

This book provides a comprehensive account of coal and Indian coalfields. Coal is the major source of energy in our country, contributing more than 60% of our energy requirement. Information on different aspects of coal like its origin and mode of occurrence, behaviour of coal seams, types of coal, its uses, resources, exploration, mining etc. are generally distributed in various books, journals and papers, sometimes in elaborate detail. But a comprehensive account covering all possible aspects of coal, specially those in the Indian context, is lacking. Information on the Indian coalfields is mostly documented in the Memoirs, Bulletins and Special Publications of Geological Survey of India. To collate and compile all the information from various sources in the form of a book is a commendable

task achieved by the authors. Starting with the geology of coal, the book deals with the various types of coal, their origin, chemical and petrographic characters, classification system, exploration and mining of coal including environmental aspects, cleaning, uses and consumption of coal, resources, development of coal worldwide and Indian coalfields. Thus the book deals with practically all the essential aspects one can possibly conceive about coal.

I am sure this book will be an asset to the students of coal in graduate, post-graduate and research levels.

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